



# WHITEHILL TOWN COUNCIL



## 2017-18 ANNUAL REPORT

April 2018

### **Councillor Colin Leach** **Mayor & Chairman of Whitehill Town Council**

2017/18 has been an extremely busy year for all Councillors and Officers within the Town Council. Not only have we continued to deliver high-quality, value for money local services; but we have also played a full and active role in the huge transformation that is happening across the town since the Army left in December 2015.

We are all driven through our passion for the town, its residents, businesses and visitors. Importantly:

- *We are in the heart of the town; elected by the community to serve you – the local community.*
- *We have a strong track record of service delivery including management of 18 green spaces, outdoor areas and facilities.*
- *We make every pound work for you through our financial stewardship and value for money ethos.*

The Town Council itself acts as one body where Councillors set aside their political differences to work collaboratively for the benefit of the town; rather than for political advantage. To foster this approach, our officers (Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk) draw up our meeting agendas to ensure that our business reflects the priorities and needs of the town and its people.

In times of continuing austerity, the Council has always striven to keep within its budget. However, we face fresh challenges because our income has decreased but our costs and commitments have risen.

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for the time and effort they have devoted to dealing with issues that were both complex and wide-ranging. In addition, I would also like on behalf of the Council to thank our officers for their hard work and dedication throughout the year. We achieved a lot in 2017/18; but there is still a lot more for us to do in 2018/19 for our town and everyone (residents, businesses, visitors and key partners alike) associated with it and its exciting future.

### **Andrea Mann** **Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer**

Whitehill Town Council is an ambitious council that seeks not only to commission and deliver high quality local services; but also to play a full and active role as your local council in the significant (once-in-a-generation) transformation of Whitehill & Bordon from garrison town to a green and healthy town. It is fair to say that balancing these demands is challenging, but one that Councillors and Officers alike embrace given our:

- *History of successful local delivery and service to the local community.*
- *Experience in partnership working as it underpins our business ethos.*
- *Mission that Whitehill & Bordon has a 'proud past & exciting future' – we are ambitious for the town and our residents; we want to work as an equal with all our partners to make it an even better place for all.*



Based within the Forest Community Centre; with 15 Councillors and a very small officer team, the majority of Town Council's time is spent managing a large portfolio of community assets and open spaces and ensuring all activities are in accordance with legislation and good practice. In 2017/18, over 50 meetings of various committees and Full Council took place and the Council actively engaged with other community organisations and regeneration partners. This demand on the Town Council will undoubtedly continue in 2018/19.

You can find out more about your local Councillors and their record of attendance; our committee work programmes and various Council meetings; our budget (see page 6) and other useful information by visiting our website at [www.whitehilltowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.whitehilltowncouncil.gov.uk) or Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/whitehilltowncouncil>



# WHITEHILL TOWN COUNCIL



All Council and Committee meetings are open to the public to demonstrate openness and transparency. Dates and times can be found on our website and agendas are published approximately four days in advance of the meeting. Members attendance at meetings can be found at

[www.whitehilltowncouncil.gov.uk/Councillor\\_Attendance](http://www.whitehilltowncouncil.gov.uk/Councillor_Attendance)

## FULL COUNCIL

In 2017/18 Council met every 5-6 weeks.

### Our 2017/18 Achievements:

- Successful 2016/17 external audit of the Town Council confirming sound governance in place.
- Retained the General Power of Competence.
- Developed a Communications & Engagement Strategy leading to a clearer targeting of resources.
- Reviewed our Strategic Plan and its priorities.
- Delivered successful and well attended community events such as the Annual Town Meeting, Flag Raising Ceremony and Remembrance Service, as well as taking part in the Summer Activity Day, Christmas Fair and the Great British Spring Clean.
- Delivered two tranches of Community Grants to over a dozen local organisations.
- Ensured Town Council representation to a number of local organisations.

### Our 2017/18 Challenges:

- Two Councillor resignations in May left vacant positions which were filled a by-election in September.
- Staffing shortages are being addressed to meet growing demands on the Council.
- Meeting the increasing demands in workload and representation on regeneration working groups.
- Changes in legislation impacting on the Council such as the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
- Reduction in funding to community groups.
- Costs of anti-social behavior and vandalism (over £8,000) impacting on the budget and the knock-on effect on projects that benefit the local community.

### Our 2018/19 Look Forward: To continue

- Focusing on the Council's agreed priorities; ensuring that every pound we spend is spent well for the benefit of the town.
- Delivering high-quality, value for money local services for our community.
- Championing the aspirations and concerns of the local community to all key partners involved in the regeneration of the town.
- Working in equal partnership with all partners to make the town an even better place for all.

## POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Policy & Resources Committee meets approximately every six weeks and has primary responsibility for the monitoring of the Council's budget to ensure expenditure is within the budgetary limits and income is being met.

Town & Parish Councils across the country are funded by a tax on local residents known as a precept. In 2017/18 a Band D property paid £79.97 towards the cost of the Town Council. Unfortunately this will increase to £88.08 due to increased costs and a reduction in income. If you live in a Band D property, your £88.08 allows the Council to deliver all the following services to local residents.

## Cost per household - £88.08



Our accounts are audited every year and the results published on our website at:

[http://www.whitehilltowncouncil.gov.uk/Accounts\\_Audits\\_and\\_Budgets\\_3639.aspx](http://www.whitehilltowncouncil.gov.uk/Accounts_Audits_and_Budgets_3639.aspx)



# WHITEHILL TOWN COUNCIL



## AMENITIES COMMITTEE

The Amenities Committee meet approximately every 6-8 weeks and is responsible for managing 18 green spaces, outdoor areas and facilities managed by the Council. The majority of these amenities (including the new skatepark) are in the existing part of the town:



### Key:

1. Knaves Mire open space
2. St Lucia Lodge open space
3. Alexandra Park
4. Jubilee Park and BMX track
5. Mill Chase Allotment site, pavilion, garage, playground and trim trail
6. Savile Crescent Allotment site
7. Mill Chase Recreation Ground
8. Hollybrook Pond
9. Deadwater Valley Nature Reserve
10. Grafton Close open space
11. Malmesbury Road open space and MUGA
12. Roxburghe Close open space
13. Cypress Road open space and MUGA
14. Fernlea open space
15. Firgrove playground
16. Whitehill Village Hall open space and playground
17. Buds Lane Skate Park
18. Bordon Inclosure

## Our 2017/18 Achievements:

- Took over the management of the new Skate Park at Buds Lane after construction by the Whitehill & Bordon Regeneration Company (WBRC).
- Management of Bordon Inclosure and Nature Reserve in conjunction with Deadwater Valley Trust
- Completed the Hollybrook Pond dredging works to remove invasive weeds and improve water quality.
- Good management of the Council's assets including:
  - Improvements to the pitch drainage at Mill Chase Recreation Ground.
  - Undertaking renovation to Mill Chase Pavilion roof tiles following rainwater ingress.
  - Improving the fencing at Savile Crescent Allotment site.
- Started a number of improvement and replacement projects, and secured the necessary funding, which will be delivered in 2018.



## Our 2017/18 Challenges:

- Numerous incidents of vandalism to the Council's assets resulting in reduced community usage, safety issues and additional expenditure.
- Excessive litter at the new Buds Lane Skate Park.
- Management of 18 sites with limited staff resources.
- Weather conditions affecting groundwork and growing conditions.

## Our 2018/19 Look Forward: To continue

- Delivering a broad range of improvement projects including:
  - Improvements to surface water drainage and ramp resurfacing at BMX Track.
  - Installation of new boardwalk at rear of Savile Crescent Allotment Site.
  - Installation of new footbridge over river in Nature Reserve.
  - Renew planters at three locations across the town in partnership with Future Skills Centre staff and students.
  - Further enhancements to Hollybrook Pond, including a dipping platform.
  - Review and re-establish the Grounds Maintenance Service Contracts.
- Monitoring the opportunity for future amenity management within the new developments.
- Increasing amenities resources and equipment to improve efficiency.



# WHITEHILL TOWN COUNCIL



## PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

Whitehill Town Council is a consultee on all planning and highways applications within the town. The actual planning decisions are made by either East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) or the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA); visit:

EHDC at <http://www.easthants.gov.uk/planning-services>  
SDNPA at <http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/HCC>

Our Planning & Highways Committee meets every three weeks to ensure that all applications referred from the two planning authorities (EHDC & SDNPA) are considered and commented within the statutory time limits imposed. In addition, the Committee also comments on certain local highways applications and regularly liaises with responsible highways authorities and utilities companies.



*Councillors Visit to Newbury Town Centre.*

### Our 2017/18 Challenges:

- Reviewing some very large and complex applications arising from the town's regeneration such as the Town Centre Phase 1 application.
- Balancing the need for healthy tree maintenance against the need to protect the town's green infrastructure.



### Our 2018/19 Look Forward: To continue

- To balance a local Council's duty to represent the community's best interests whilst complying with planning legislation.
- To keep up with the ongoing changes in planning legislation.
- To research opportunities for sponsorship of roundabouts and planters on highway verges to enhance the visual amenity of the town.



### Our 2017/18 Achievements:

- Considered over 90 EHDC & SDNPA Planning and Tree Works Applications including a number of reserved matters applications associated with the Town Centre Phase 1 such as the Energy Centre and Leisure Centre.
- Examined and commented on the South Downs National Park Local Plan.
- Submitted views to various external organisations on cycling/walking strategy and Highways and Transport Satisfaction survey.
- Attended site visits to Newbury town centre to gain insight into a similar town centre development as planned for Whitehill and Bordon; and Chichester to see similar housing designs.





# WHITEHILL TOWN COUNCIL



## MAXIMISING OPPORTUNITIES

The changes across the town are huge and it is vital that – as your locally elected council – we engage as fully as possible in the regeneration programme. We represent the town, its community and you. Our mission reflects this:

***Whitehill & Bordon has a 'proud past & exciting future' – we are ambitious for the town and our residents; we want to work as an equal with all our partners to make it an even better place for all.***



Whitehill Town Council manage Bordon Inclosure, the first of two new Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) in Bordon.

## Our 2017/18 Achievements:

- Direct involvement and representation on a broad range of regeneration work-streams and working groups including:
  - Xchange – including Welcome Pack Working Party & a new Community Events Calendar.
  - Sports & Leisure working group.
  - One public service hub working group.
  - Arts & Heritage working group.
  - Whitehill & Bordon Community Trust.
  - Green Loop working group.
  - Healthy New Town programme.
  - Community Facilities working group.
- Holding regular liaison meetings with the Whitehill & Bordon Regeneration Company (WBRC), Barratts, Radian, Hampshire County Council, East Hampshire District Council, etc to discuss areas of mutual interest & raise any community concerns or issues.
- Ensuring that all regeneration programme engagement is reported back to Council.
- Submitted an Expression of Interest to WBRC to manage the new Bordon & Oakhanger Sports Club.



Following a successful bid, the Council now manages the new skatepark at Budds Lane.

## Our 2017/18 Challenges:

- Engaging in a timely manner with the regeneration programme and its various working groups whilst also managing the Council's own work programme.
- Keeping briefed and up to date within a fast moving regeneration programme.
- Working with regeneration partners to improve communication to residents – Youth Focused Annual Town Meeting, feedback to Xchange, answering and signposting residents' questions, sharing updates in the Council's newsletter, hand delivering welcome letter to new residents.

## Our 2018/19 Look Forward: To continue

- Working proactively and positively with numerous regeneration partners to ensure that the needs of the existing town and its residents are represented.
- Regularly reviewing opportunities resulting from the town's regeneration and consider where the Council has a potential interest in taking on additional responsibility including:
  - Potential management of Hogmoor Inclosure.
  - Involvement in Sports & Leisure opportunities, specifically the Playing Pitches Strategy.
  - Potential management of new open spaces, parks and play areas being created.
- Providing a local voice for regeneration initiatives through the Council's involvement in the Whitehill & Bordon Community Trust and WBRC's long term green infrastructure plan and strategic board.



Relief Road Site Visit.



# WHITEHILL TOWN COUNCIL



## Did you know?

- That Whitehill Parish Council was created by an Act of Parliament in 1928 and changed its name to Whitehill Town Council in 1991.
- The 2011 census gave the town's population figure as 13,259 and 5,162 households. It is, of course, much more than that now given the huge regeneration programme currently under way and the population is expected to grow to 22,000 by 2030.
- The Town comprises of 5 wards (Chase, Deadwater, Hogmoor, Pinewood & Walldown) each served by 3 Councillors. Town Councillors are volunteers who can be contacted through the Council's website and Council Office:
- Town Councillors are elected every 4 years, the next election is in May 2019.
- We currently manage 18 green spaces, outdoor areas and facilities.
- In 2017/18 alone we considered over 90 planning applications from EHDC and SDNPA.

We are all driven through our passion for the town, its residents, businesses and visitors. Importantly:

- *We are in the heart of the town; elected by the community to serve you – the local community.*
- *We have a strong track record of service delivery including management of green spaces, outdoor areas and facilities.*
- *We make every pound work for you through our financial stewardship and value for money ethos.*



## Changing Town / Changing Times

To our many partners (too numerous to mention by name) who are actively involved in making Whitehill & Bordon an even better place to live, work, visit and do business – we say a big thank you to each and everyone one of you. The Town Council – as the champions of the

local community - seeks to play its full and equal part building on its:

- *History of successful local delivery and service to the local community.*
- *Experience in partnership working as it under-pins our business ethos.*
- *Mission that Whitehill & Bordon has a 'proud past & exciting future' – we are ambitious for the town and our residents; we want to work as an equal with all our partners to make it an even better place for all.*

## STOP PRESS: Forest Community Centre future

The Town Council is currently looking into whether it should take on the lease and management of the Forest Community Centre from the Whitehill & Bordon Community Association later on this year. A full business case is currently being developed which will be considered at an Extraordinary Council meeting on 30 April. For the Council, it is important that the business case proves that we can offer a high quality facility for the local community whilst demonstrating value for money.

We hope to be in a position to set out our initial thoughts at the Annual Town Meeting on 25 April; noting that they will be subject to formal decision at the Extraordinary Council meeting.

## Open Invitation

Come and find out more about the Council, its work and your local Councillors by attending any of our public meetings at the Forest Community Centre.

Visit our website to find out our meeting dates & times and we look forward to meeting you in the community.

